**Post:**

**How do schools overcome socio-economic barriers to parental involvement in education?**  
Sundown schools require more work than what can be accomplished between the opening and closing bells of the school day. Homework is the medium used to accomplish work outside of the school day. The success of these demands is dependent upon the support and encouragement of the student's parents or guardians. Due to the increasing number of students that fall into the socio-economically disadvantaged category, the issue of parental involvement has become an issue for all schools.   
  
An action research inquiry based study would be beneficial in solving this particular problem. Inquiry refers to the process of engaging in systematic, intentional study and research and taking action on what is learned from the research. (Dana, 2009). Due to the fact that this is a universal problem, there should be an abundance of data available as well as many similar case studies from other schools from which to gain insight through inquiry.   
  
Dana, N. (2009). Leading With Passion And Knowledge: The Principal as Action Researcher. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Publications.

**Responses:**

Jack, you always post good information about education. I agree that parental involvement is very important for a student's ability to learn. Do you think that a pricipal should involve the school's PTO as a step in the action research plan? Should our dependency fall on the parents or should we add time within the day to help students with homework?

I think the PTO should definitely be involved. The parents that are more involved can help the school bring other parents in. The school doesn't necessarily have to depend solely on the parents. Education should be collaborative. I also don't think that time during the school day should be used to complete homework. If it can't be completed at home, either modification is needed to the homework or to instruction so that the student can complete their homework. Ideally parents should be available to help their child but we need to work with what we have.

I think our principal has already looked into this issue. She applied and received a grant through our local community to set up a parent library on our campus. It will include magazines, journals and books that will help parents catch up on how concepts are taught now. They can also sign up for assistance from the appropriate staff member on campus or volunteer to help at school. She is in the process of getting this up and running soon. I hope parents will take the initiative and take advantage of this opportunity. I've had several parents over the years ask how to complete 1st grade homework (something as simple as AB patterns and ten frames) but I'm sure there are several who did not ask.

Jack, the lack of parental involvement is definitely a problem in many districts, especially title 1 schools and low performing school districts. Last year our school didn't have an open house due to the low attendance of parents. It is a sad situation. Our school is a title 1 school where most parents can't speak English. When a few parents attended an open house in the past and couldn't communicate with their children's teachers they became frustrated. I think there should be some type of parent workshops so that parents can be involved in their children's educational experiences. Parents need to understand the importance of their children's education. The students in my school district do not have any parental support when it comes to homework or their education, if they do not get the support from the teachers, administrators, peers or staff, the students tend to become uninterested in school because there is no parental support or motivation for them to continue and this leads to a high dropout rate. As I stated, that my action research study would be to get unmotivated students motivated and I believe that parental involvement is one of the factors that affect unmotivated students.

What kind of work is required that it can't be completed during the school day? I am of the opinion that homework is necessary for reinforcement of concepts taught during the day but it should not be used for teaching new concepts while not in school. I'm not arguing against the need for parental involvement in a student's education but if the requirements of a school are too much for a school day then those requirements need to be re-evaluated.

Parental involvement is not just helping a student with homework. It is encouragement and support. It is supporting the school and education in general. It is attending extracurricular activities at school to show support to the student. It is pat a kid on the back for a job well done or a boost of encouragement when needed. It is a lot to ask of a teacher to be both a teacher and a parent to all their students. It is parents volunteering to help with field trips, giving $5 to help pay for a class party or baking cookies. It is parents volunteering to help with prom. Parenting shouldn't stop when a child is dropped off at school.

That is a noble cause, Jack, and one that merits the world's full attention. When you are done, I wish you could write a book to share your findings with everybody, as the current state of affairs is abysmal, and if it continues to worsen, will lead to society's downfall. That may sound alarmist, but in my current district, things are very discouraging and we are grasping at straws.

I also agree with you that it is not all about helping with homework. It is much more than that, and encompasses everything from a child's behavior to motivation to academic achievement. It is, in my estimation, about half of a child's chances of succeeding in life.